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## Bet You Missed It

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# Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Rosann Bazirjian** (Florida State University) <rbazirji@mailers.fsu.edu>; FAX 904-644-5170.

## Spider and the Fly by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This is an article about what is being developed in the world of Web spiders. Businesses are seeking to create the smarter spider; one which can be custom tailored to a browser's needs and set priorities based on a customer profile. One company called **Agents Inc.**, has developed a creation they call "Firefly," which they feel is

an intelligent agent able to navigate the Web more efficiently than traditional Web spiders. The author claims that smart agents may ease online gridlock "simply by making customers much more discriminating." See — "Spider's Helper" by **Nikhil Hutheesing**, *Forbes*, vol. 158 (1) (July 1, 1996), p. 79.

## Mediocrity by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article is based on the premise that software is, at best, mediocre because it is difficult to understand and fails on a predictable basis. The author, **Stewart Alsop**, then cites examples of software which he feels are poorly designed. Alsop cites four reasons for this: 1) computers change too quickly and software is unable to keep up 2) wiring software is ex-

tremely difficult 3) people who write software are "inherently less social" than others and 4) consumers do not really require that software work perfectly, i.e., they tolerate mediocrity. See — "The Trouble With Software Is ... by **Stewart Alsop**, *Fortune*, vol. 133(11) (June 10, 1996), p. 100-101.

## Very Important Tree by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Maddison brothers David and Wayne have planted the Tree of

Life (TOL) on the Web, a vast endeavor that will ultimately include the genetic and evolutionary relationships, photographs, and life histories of every type of living organism. The sapling of only 20 months already has grown to more than 1000 pages of data on organisms in 7500 taxa branching across 10 computers on two continents. The online advantages are enormous, and in time it will include a peer-reviewed electronic journal. For now, scientists are elated at the ability to trace evolution, easily see masses of information not easily available elsewhere, and to share previously isolated work with colleagues across the globe. See <http://phylogeny.arizona.edu/tree/phylogeny.html>. See — "Web-Crawling Up the Tree of Life" by **Virginia Morell**, *Science*, vol. 273 (August 2, 1996), p. 568-570.



## Take This Out for a Spin by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article describes a service dubbed "TestDrive." The service provides what is described as an "electronic shrink wrap." The consumer may download a program from the publisher's electronic storefront located on a Web site. TestDrive allows that individual to use the product free of charge based on a set period of time chosen by the publisher. When their time is up, they are asked to either

purchase the software or have the software automatically deleted from their hard drive. TestDrive has earned \$1.6 million this year. Their chief executive, **Edward Lauing**, would like to license this technology to CompuServe, Babbages and other large commercial ventures. See — "Try It, You'll Like It" by **Nikhil Hutheesing**, *Forbes*, vol. 158 (1) (July 1, 1996), p. 78.

## Software Success by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article is about software economics, and spotlights a business called **ID Software**, which has somehow "mastered the peculiar economics of the software industry." They understand the need of getting a firm foothold on the market. That foothold can "morph into a fortress." The article con-

tains a detailed analysis of the economics of the software industry, from its high-fixed-cost/low-variable-cost nature to the philosophy behind success. See — "Give It Away and Get Rich" by **James Alely**, *Fortune*, vol. 133 (11) (June 10, 1996), p. 90-98.

## Research and Education: A Profitable Combination by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Most educators are enthusiastic about the **National Science Foundation's** (NSF) new Recognition Awards for the Integration of Research and Education (RAIRE) being offered to research intensive universities to help publicize innovative, campus-based efforts that integrate research and education at all levels. NSF is also

looking for models that will help expand existing programs that promote these twin missions. Three-page applications due July 5 must be submitted electronically (see <http://www.nsf.gov/od/osti>). See — "Awards Mark Research-Learning Links" by **Jeffrey Mervis**, *Science*, vol. 272, (June 28, 1996), p. 1868.

## Censorship Charge by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

**John Hartung's** book review of **Kevin MacDonald's** *A People That Shall Dwell Alone ...*, published in the journal of the *Human Behavior and Evolution Society* (HBES), led to allegations of censorship against **Elsevier**, and resulted in a new publishing con-

tract guaranteeing editorial independence as well as modification of an Hbes Internet discussion group to ban "insensitive" and "irrelevant" postings. See — "Publisher Draws Censorship Charge" by **Constance Holden**, *Science*, vol. 273 (July 12, 1996), p. 177



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**Publication Canceled**  
by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

After Christopher Brand's *The G Factor* was canceled on the eve of publication, Arthur Jensen's tome on the "general intelligence" factor was also rejected by Wiley who concluded that they were "not the right publisher ...,"

despite a positive outlook by Jensen's editor. See — "Wiley Declines to Publish Jensen Book" by Constance Holden in Random Samples section of *Science*, vol. 273 (August 16, 1996), p. 877.

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**Web Citations**  
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

A guide to the emerging standards for citing Web pages, Gopher menus, and Usenet posts. Among the hints: save the documents you cite; identify the author/source if humanly possible;

check out Janice Walker's *MLA Style Citations of Electronic Sources* <<http://www.cas.usf.edu/english/walker/mla.html>>. See — "Cyber Citations," *Internet World*, September 1996, p. 72.

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**Survival and the Local Newspaper**  
by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)

"The Emporia Gazette" edited from 1895-1944 by William Allen White is still owned by his family. The question is, can local newspapers survive? And, if so,

how? See — Karen Olsson, "The Sweet, Intimate Story of Life," *Civilization*, vol. 3 (4) (August/September 1996), p. 50-57.

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**Library Web Pages Spotlighted**  
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

This month the Cyberlibrarian column of IW highlights some of the Web pages created by librarians in the U.S. and Canada. Worth looking at for some specialized

resources that may help in our work. See — "Look to the Librarians," *Internet World*, August 1996, p. 28-30.

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**Filtering Access**  
by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

IW Labs reviews seven currently available programs that filter Internet access. In the wake of the defeat of the Communications Decency Act, these filtering pro-

grams could be the answer parents, educators and others are looking for. See — "Safe Computing," *Internet World*, September 1996, p. 49.

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**London Literary Scene**  
by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)

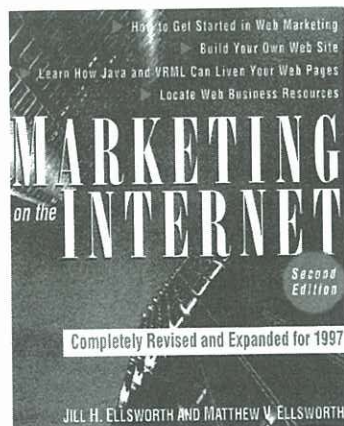
The author discusses the London literary scene with its emphasis on authors, critics, literary prizes, and the reasons New York will never supplant it. See —

Daniel Johnson, "A Zest for Controversy," *Civilization*, vol. 3 (4) (August/September 1996), p. 76-78.

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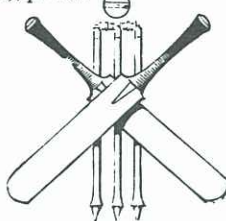
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### Preprint Archive by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The American Physical Society (APS) has decided that the way to beat the Los Alamos National Laboratory electronic preprint archives extolled by physicists is to imitate it. APS now has its own prototype preprint server at <http://publish.aps.org/eprint/>, which will not only serve as a repository of preprints, but also the point from which articles are submitted to any APS journal. Differences from the Los Alamos site include a broader range of word processing formats,

and intent to discard unaccepted submissions after a specified time period. See — "APS Starts Electronic Preprint Service" by Gary Taubes, *Science*, vol. 273 (July 19, 1996), p. 304.



### Bioinformatics by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The annual special issue on computers links bioinformatics and the Internet, two boom areas in computer science. News stories include Internet congestion, software matchmakers helping to make sense of sequences, an article on Java, and on the new high-speed network which will link Russia's far-flung universities. There are also articles on map-

ping the protein universe, and the use of four-dimensional imaging to visualize movements within living systems. Fulltext with links to related resources can be found at <http://www.sciencemag.org/science/scripts/display/full/273/5275/585.htm>. See — "Computers '96" special section in *Science*, vol. 273 (August 2, 1996), p. 559-603.

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### Plug and Play by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

IW Labs reviews four new plug-and-play servers that can save time and money in getting a Web site up and running: WebWerx I (Beyond 2000 Inc.); ProLiant 1500, Model 5-123 (Compaq Corp.); InterServe Web 30 (Intergraph); and WebCube Model

1200-133 (Pacific Internet). These new products provide an "instant" Web server without the hassle normally involved in setting one up. See — "Plug-and-Play Web Servers," *Internet World*, August 1996, p. 72.

### Frenzy on the Net by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) vBNS (very high-speed Backbone Network Service) connecting five supercomputer centers is in a merger frenzy as it links up with other specialized research networks. NSF also has 13 awards

available under a program to fund links to vBNS from universities. See — "Research Agencies Cast a Wider Internet," edited by Jocelyn Kaiser in ScienceScope section, *Science*, vol. 273 (August 23, 1996), p. 1035.

### Performance Speed by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

This article reports on IRAM, the latest brainchild of Dave Patterson, the computer science professor at UC Berkeley who pioneered RISC & RAID. IRAM-- "intelligent RAM"-- involves attempting to put a microprocessor into a memory chip, which would radically improve computer performance by improving memory

\*speed.\* Explaining "why" gets a bit technical, but the bottom line is that combining RAM and microprocessor in one chip would eliminate the bottleneck presented by the "wiring" that connects memory to a processor in today's machines. See — "Intelligent RAM," *Wired*, August 1996, p. 72.

### A Happy Union? by Philip Dankert (Cornell University)

In this point of view" article the author, who has been both a book review editor as well as editor of a print journal, expresses the belief that print and electronic book reviewing can coexist if both media evolve. "Each medium will do best by building on its strengths while recognizing those of the other." In concluding he notes that sometimes duplication creates not

redundancy but additional possibilities. It may even happen, in the future, that scholars may wonder how they ever got along without the existence of both forms of publishing. See — "Print and Electronic Book Reviewing Can Peacefully Coexist," by Christopher L. Tomlins, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 9, 1996, p. A40.

### Copy Service Blues by Sarah Tusa (Lamar University)

The copy service that started as a private enterprise "with one copier in a converted taco stand" has announced plans to sell thirty percent of its stock to the New York buyout firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice Inc. Nanette

Byrnes reveals the story behind the decision to go public and the growing pains involved. See — "Kinko's Goes Corporate" in *Business Week*, no. 3489, (August 19, 1996), p.58-59.